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R 011430Z AUG 07
FM AMEMBASSY KABUL
TO RUEHNO/USMISSION USNATO 3662
RUEHC/SECSTATE WASHDC 9425
INFO RUCNAFG/AFGHANISTAN COLLECTIVE
RUEKJCS/OSD WASHINGTON DC
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E.O. 12958: DECL: 07/29/2017
TAGS: [EAIR](#) [ECON](#) [PREL](#) [AF](#)
SUBJECT: AFGHANISTAN - NATO MANEUVERING TO GET CONTROL OF
CIVIL AVIATION ISSUES

Classified By: AMB WILLIAM B. WOOD, for reasons 1.4 (b) and (d)

(U) This is an action cable; USMISSION USNATO, please see
para 9.

SUMMARY

¶1. (C/NF) NATO's civilian leadership in Afghanistan has been lobbying the GoA to gain control of civil aviation development at the expense of the Afghan Ministry of Transport and Civil Aviation (MoTCA) and the established donor coordination process. The NATO Senior Civilian Representative (SCR) in Afghanistan, Daan Everts (former Netherlands Ambassador), has strongly advocated to the GoA that it reorganize the existing Afghanistan National Development Strategy (ANDS) structure for transportation so that NATO would supplant MoTCA from its chairmanship of the civil aviation working group.

¶2. (C/NF) Under Everts's proposal, NATO would become co-chair of a new working group together with the Afghan National Security Advisor, replacing the existing structure where MoTCA is the sole chair and the U.S. is donor coordinator. The Minister of Transport and Civil Aviation has sent several letters and emails opposing the NATO proposals, and the Embassy has attempted to persuade both the SCR and the International Security Assistance Force (ISAF) staff to work through the multilateral ANDS working group. End summary.

¶3. (C/NF) NATO's lobbying for ascendancy in civil aviation stems at least in part from a sincere conviction that the military can make progress more quickly than the GoA and its other international partners. In a narrow sense, they may be right. But developing the Afghans' capacity to run a civil aviation system on their own is a large part of the civilian development goal, and the NATO plans are light on civil aviation capacity building. NATO's military interests, which tend to crowd out civilian aviation, and its limited expertise in civil aviation development, both argue against having the military alliance take charge of civil aviation.

¶4. (C/NF) NATO's attempt to engage unilaterally with the Afghans,

avoiding cooperation with other donors, is a serious distraction. Essentially, rather than pressing its case in the open forum of the JCMB/ANDS, NATO is lobbying for its own programs in private. In doing so, it runs the risk of subverting the JCMB/ANDS decision-making process. In our meetings thus far, there appears to be plenty of common ground, but Everts continues to insist on his co-chaired structure. He has yet to convince the GoA to adopt his idea.

QUERY FOR USMISSION USNATO

15. (C/NF) One GoA official recently told us that NATO's Secretary General raised the issue of NATO's control of the

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ANDS structure for civil aviation with President Karzai on the margins of the recent Rome conference on the rule of law in Afghanistan. Post would be interested in USNATO's perspective as to whether Everts is acting independently or under instructions from the NATO Council.

WOOD